

# RPI Students and Local Game Studios Unite for Annual Game Development Showcase

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's Game Development Club recently hosted its annual **Rensselaer Games Showcase**, a vibrant event that highlights the creativity, talent, and innovation found within both the student body and the local game-development community. Each year, the showcase serves as an essential gathering point where aspiring developers, seasoned professionals, and curious community members come together to playtest new projects, exchange ideas, and celebrate their shared passion for interactive design.

The showcase continues to grow, reflecting both the maturity of RPI's game development scene and the increasing influence of regional studios in New York's Tech Valley. This year's gathering demonstrated how collaboration between students and industry professionals can spark fresh ideas and strengthen the pipeline of emerging talent.

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## A Hub for Creativity, Feedback, and Professional Connection

The Games Showcase was designed to offer participants a space where they could present works in progress and receive direct feedback from players and developers. For students, it is an opportunity to gain exposure outside the classroom, while studios use the event to highlight current projects and meet potential future hires.

A total of **25 teams** presented at this year's showcase, including **five local game studios** and **20 student-led groups**. The participating studios—**Velan Studios, Peripheral Playbox, Rushdown Studios, Wolfjaw Studios, and Tech Valley Game Space**—are well-established contributors to the regional gaming ecosystem. Their involvement provided attendees with valuable insight into the realities of professional game development.

Throughout the event, guests could test a diverse selection of projects. From digital prototypes and fully playable video games to tabletop designs and interactive art experiences, the variety reflected the broad spectrum of skills the students develop through their academic and extracurricular work at RPI.

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## Organized and Led by the RPI Game Development Club

The entire event was coordinated by the officers of the **RPI Game Development Club**, a student-run organization founded in 2001 to support and inspire game creators across campus. The current leadership team includes:

- **Aiden Crossfield '26**, President
- **Alex Genchev '27**, Vice President
- **Anisha Biswas '27**, Secretary
- **Lune DiFulco '26**, Treasurer
- **Alex Hertz '27**, Publicity Officer
- **Eduardo Huamani '27**, Publicity Officer

Together, the officers managed event logistics, promotion, communication with studios, and coordination with student presenters.

Crossfield emphasized the importance of building a community where people can learn from one another and showcase their creative progress. He expressed gratitude for the opportunity to bring students and professionals together, noting how valuable it is for all participants to share ideas and enjoy a day centered around gaming.

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### Highlight Project: “Karkinos’ Ascension”

One of the standout student presentations was “**Karkinos’ Ascension**”, a project created by Crossfield and seven of his classmates. Developed over just eight weeks for their **Game Development 1** course, the game offers players a whimsical adventure in the mythic underwater city of Atlantis.

Players control a crab navigating sandy ruins in search of star fragments—magical pieces that allow the creature to return to its celestial home in the constellation Cancer. The team used the showcase as an opportunity to gather real-time feedback from players, allowing them to observe what worked well and what could be refined in future iterations.

This ability to test early builds with a live audience is a hallmark of the showcase and one of its greatest strengths. Many student developers noted that player input gave them insights they could not have discovered through internal playtesting alone.

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## Supporting Diversity in Technology Through Fundraising

In addition to spotlighting creative talent, this year's showcase included a charitable component. Club members organized a bake-sale fundraiser to support **Black Girls Code**, a nonprofit dedicated to expanding access to STEM education and coding resources for young Black girls and other underrepresented groups.

The organization's mission—to make technology and computer science accessible to all students, regardless of background or identity—resonated strongly with the club. Crossfield noted that opportunities like the showcase have had a meaningful impact on RPI students, and the club hoped to extend similar opportunities to others through their fundraising efforts.

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## A Legacy of Supporting Game Developers at RPI

Since its founding more than two decades ago, the Game Development Club has served as a hub for creativity, experimentation, and peer-to-peer learning. The club welcomes members of all majors and experience levels, from experienced programmers and artists to newcomers eager to try their hand at game design for the first time.

Throughout the academic year, the club hosts:

- **Game development workshops**
- **Weekly collaborative meetings**
- **Open development sessions**
- **Monthly Game Jams**, where participants build a complete game in just 48 hours

These activities help students develop technical skills, strengthen interdisciplinary teamwork, and build impressive portfolios that can support internships and full-time opportunities.

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## A Celebration of Innovation and Community

The annual Rensselaer Games Showcase stands out as one of the most anticipated events for students in the **Games and Simulation Arts and Sciences (GSAS)** program and beyond. It

provides an inclusive space where creators from different backgrounds—whether they study engineering, art, computer science, or design—can demonstrate how their skills converge in the world of game development.

For local studios, the showcase offers a window into emerging trends and new talent. For students, it is both a learning experience and a celebration of their creativity. And for the broader community, it is an opportunity to enjoy unique games and support the next generation of developers.

By bringing together education, innovation, and collaboration, the Games Showcase continues to strengthen the connection between RPI and the growing technology and gaming industries across the region. It underscores the value of hands-on learning, community support, and the shared excitement that fuels game creation.